FIRST COMICS LIMITED SERIES NO. 2 of 3

JUNE NO. 2 $1.25 $1.75 CANADA

dynaMO

vs.

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Dear Tabby

C/O FIRST COMICS
435 N. LASALLE
CHICAGO IL 60610

BIO DEPT.

Ah, tradition! What do you do in the second issue of a title when you haven't yet any mail for the first issue? You give the folks the inside poop on the talent that's creating the pages they're enjoying. So now we answer the most asked question about **Dynamo Joe** artist/creator **Doug Rice**—" Is he Japanese? He seems to know everything about Japanese animation and his last name *is* Rice and Japanese eat lots of rice so is Doug Rice Japanese?"

No. He was born in November, 1950, which makes his—let's see...—thirty-five at this writing. Doug served in the USAF between '68 and '72, rising to the rank of Sergeant; after that he went to UICC (University of Illinois - Chicago Circle—or is that Cynosure Center?) for three years. Doug's a self-taught artist and started free-lancing in 1975. (Side note A: Doug was one of the first people, if not *the* first, I talked to when I started developing a concept that wound up being Grimjack.)

Among the books he has illustrated is the first printing of *Bug Wars,* by Robert Aspirin (St. Martins Press). He also worked on Philip K. Dick's *Urik: Screenplay.* As a writer, Doug has been a contributing editor on *Fantastic Films* magazine. He is also the designer for a live-action giant robot film that's in development called B.R.U.T.E.

Doug's been into Japanese Anime/ Manga since 1976 and did one other giant robot strip called Champion: Solar 7, which appeared in *Just Imagine.* (Side note B: *Just Imagine* is slated to start publishing again soon and is worth your support. Doug wasn't the first talent we swiped away from them and probably won't be the last. Good place to see where the up and coming talent is coming from.)

Doug has also been a part of our crack-(ed) production staff for some time now, along with our primo colorist - **Rick Taylor.** Rick's habit of calling everyone "Larry" comes from working on the **The Badger.** If Rick was taller, he'd be scary.

As you might have guessed, Doug's very into Japanese culture, past and present. He's also into Italian Westerns, werewolf stories, mysteries, SF, pulps and cats. He also has occasionally excreable taste in films. He also has lots of patience, though he gets a pained look on his face whenever I suggest we do things like paint Joe's face white, green, and red and call him Dynamo Joker.

He's single, but I don't think he's religious about it.

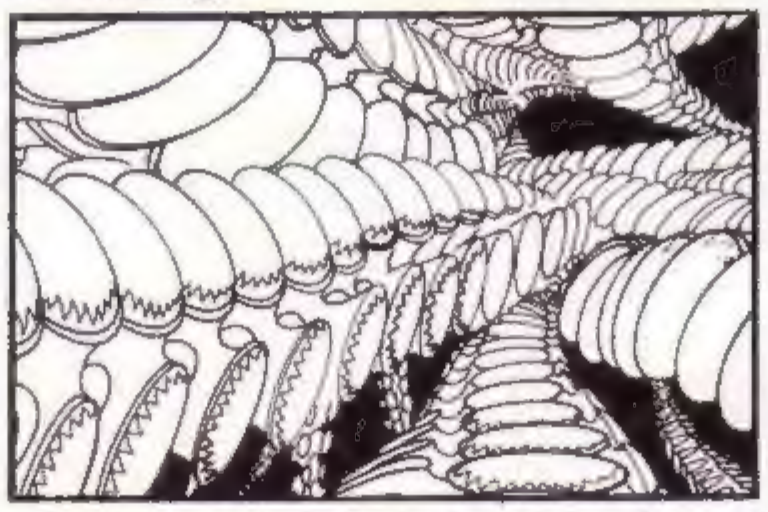
Me? Oh, I was born somewhere and I expect to die elsewhere and spend the time inbetween writing things like **DJ, GJ,** and trying to get my *Doctor Who* play on the boards. **Starslayer** 10 had a more complete bio, if you really want it. Yeah, this is a cheap cop-out.

LETTER DEPT.

Actually, we do have a letter. The redoubtable T.M. Maple penned one after he read **First Adventures** #3.

Dear Firsters,

Once more, the Dynamo Joe installment was gripping, making it the highlight of the issue for the third time running. The idea of a "massive alien brain" composed of small physically-separated parts is not a new one, but it is one that has not been overly exploited in comics. Too often, an alien menace merely mirrors what we view as the dark side of the human mind. The enemy in Dynamo Joe has the potential to be a truly alien type of alien! Another pitfall is that these composite brains are often treated as being just like a sort of super human-type brain. But such a brain would have to be fundamentally different from ours, not just an enhanced version. What would be the psychological effects of having simultaneous sensory input from widely diverse sources, for instance? How would/could a brain sort and organize such a flood of information? The brain could be constantly changing in composition as various subgroups came in or out of contact, were destroyed, or were created. How could a brain retain a core of unified integrity when faced with such significant fluctuations? Hopefully, some sort of examination of the enemy's alieness will be forthcoming.



I was somewhat confused by the actions of the medical officer. Presumably, he too is controlled by the alien organisms, thus explaining why he threatens to kill Daro at the installment's end. But in that case, why did he tell Daro the full story in the first place? Or *is* it the full story? Or perhap's Daro's reactions were monitored as part of the experiment. Can the aliens be so confident that they will let Daro "win" his freedom to see how he will attempt to defeat the experiment?

T.M. Maple
Box 1272, Station B
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The control that the aliens kept on the Corregidor crew was mostly through the subconcious. Doctor Hu's rational mind knew the importance of transmitting the info to Daro. Indeed, it may have all been part of the experiment. What went wrong for the Enemy was that Daro and the others should have become part of the experiment, and instead escaped.

We'll learn more about the Mellenares down the road. Always assuming, of course, that there is a down the road for the crew of Dynamo Joe.

NEXT ISSUE: The eye-popping conclusion—*In the Ashes—from me,* **Doug Rice, Brian Thomas** and **John Nyberg.**

Be our valentine. Hug a robot.

—*John Ostrander*

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DYNAMO JOE™

SIGMA BASE SIX. FORWARD COMMAND POST OF THE CENTRAL FLEET, MUSTERING PLACE FOR THE ALLIED FORCES - CONFEDERATION, TAVITAN, IMPERIUM - IN THE DECADE OLD ORION WAR.

SIX MONTHS HAVE PASSED SINCE THE "QUALIFIED SUCCESS" OF THE GALAX-C ROBOT.* SIX INTENSE MONTHS OF PLOTTING AND PLANNING, OF GATHERING AND ORDERING AND ATTEMPTING TO BRING UNITY OUT OF APPARENT CHAOS. AND ALL THE WHILE, THE ENEMY CREEPS CLOSER.

NOW, AT LAST, THE ALLIANCE IS READY TO STRIKE!

*LAST ISSUE-RAO

THE DYNAMO CLASS BATTLESUITS SWARM TO THEIR TRANSPORT SHIPS. IN LESS THAN TWELVE HOURS, THEY WILL BEGIN THEIR JOURNEY TO THE BINARY-STAR PROCYON, TO BEGIN THE MOST IMPORTANT BATTLE SINCE THE ORION WAR BEGAN.

ON THIS BATTLE WILL DEPEND THE ALLIANCE'S VERY SURVIVAL, AND FOR ITS SUCCESS, ANYONE OR ANYTHING CAN AND WILL BE SACRIFICED.

BOLOSHOT BRIMFIRE!

DOUG RICE
CREATOR / PENCILLER
JOHN OSTRANDER
-WRITER
BRIAN THOMAS
&
JOHN NYBERG
-INKERS
WILLIE SCHUBERT
LETTERER
RICK TAYLOR
COLORIST
RICK OLIVER
EDITOR

I HATE THIS PLAN!

IT IS MADNESS, THIS PLAN! IT FLIES IN FACE OF ALL CONVENTIONAL MILITARY WISDOM!

AND- SAY WHAT YOU LIKE, MY FRIENDS- THERE IS A REASON IT IS CALLED WISDOM!

HURRR! ALSO WHY IT IS CALLED 'CONVENTIONAL.'

YOU HAVE A CHANCE TO MAKE HISSTORY, FIELD MARSHALL-- AS AN INNOVATORR.' THEY WILL ALWAYS REMEMBERR YOU.

DO. AS IPPOLITOV THE IMBECILE.

THE POINT IS MOOT, SERGEI.

IN ANY UNDERTAKING AS LARGE AS BOLOSHOT BRIMFIRE, WE CANNOT AFFORD TO ALTER OUR PLANS SO SHORTLY BEFORE THEY COMMENCE.

NO?

EVEN IF PLAN IS SUCCESSFUL BEYOND WILDEST HOPES, AKIRA, THE COST IN LIVES- SOLDIERS' LIVES- WILL BE ENORMOUS, YES?

CAN WE 'AFFORD' THOSE LIVES AND NOT RECONSIDER, DOWN TO THE LAST SECOND?

WE MUST CONSIDER ALSO, THE GREATER NUMBER OF LIVES - BOTH CIVILIAN AND SOLDIER - THAT WILL BE SPARED BY THIS OPERATION.

DA. IF WE SUCCEED!

"OF EQUAL CHANCE IS THE POSSIBILITY WE FAIL - HORRIBLY! MUCH OF THE CENTRAL FLEET COULD BE LOST. THEN OUR BACK WILL BE BROKEN AND NOTHING WILL BE LEFT BUT TO EVACUATE AS MUCH OF THE POPULATION OF LONDEE AND TERRA AS WE MAY."

ALL THIS -PUFF!- WE RISK -PUFF!- ON A SINGLE THROW!

tzt!

SIGHHHHH.

TIMES LIKE THESE MAKE ME WISH I HAD A GOD TO PRAY TO.

IS THE FIELD MARSHALL ALWAYS THIS OPTIMISTIC BEFORE A BATTLE?

NO. SOMETIMES HE IS LESS ENTHUSIASTIC.

I SHARE HIS CONCERN FOR THE LOSS OF LIFE WE WILL ENDURE. I CANNOT INDULGE IT AS FAR AS THE FIELD MARSHALL MAY.

ADMIRAL SHIMAMURA!

PRINCE SHAETON.

AND LOOK! YOU ARE WITH GENERAL IPPOLITOV AND AMBASSADOR GRAWOOL! MY MY!

YOU WEREN'T PLANNING STRATEGY, WERE YOU?

WITHOUT YOU, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MAGNA KHAN AND LEADER OF THE IMPERIUM FORCES?

UNTHINKABLE.

BRIEFING ROOM, SPECTRE SQUAD. SQUAD LEADER ELANIAN DARO PRESIDING.

THESE ARE THE FINAL SUIT ASSIGNMENTS. ANSWER AS YOU'RE CALLED.

ROGER-DOKEY, SARGE!

WAIT FOR IT, POMRU.

FIRST NOTES

NINTH IN FEBRUARY

This month is something of a landmark for First as we surpass the magic number of eight for the first time, with a total of NINE books coming your way in February. And you know what that means? Well, it means we're growing faster than kudzu, bigger than Godzilla, and larger than a sumo wrestler on steroids -- but it also means more stuff in the "First In [fill-in-your-favorite-month]" column and less room for me to stumble around searching for meaningless metaphors to fill up this column.

It also means I get fewer opportunities to cajole, insult, and generally outrage the reading public -- and otherwise stick my foot in my mouth. So I guess it's all for the better, although not nearly as much fun. Anyway, on to the blatant hype, which is what they pay me for in the first place...

SECOND IN FEBRUARY

Whisper returns in a new bi-monthly series this month, written by creator **Steven Grant** and drawn by **Dell Barras**. If you've seen our ads, you already know what Dell's art looks like. If you haven't, go buy some copies of last month's books and find out. The ad's the same in all our titles; but buy all eight just to make sure.

This is sort of a "double-second" because it's the second Whisper series (the first was published by Capital Publications) and the second First appearance for Whisper, having just completed a successful tour in **First Adventures**.

It is, however, issue #1 -- because we couldn't figure out any other number to give it, and "one" is invariably the first number that comes to mind.

February also marks the return of **Shatter**, the First computerized comic book. Shatter took a short vacation while we refined the revolutionary computer process and figured out how all the new electronic gizmos worked. Actually, we still don't know *how* they work; but they do -- as you can see if you bought a copy. If you didn't, go out right now and buy one. In fact, make it eight just to make sure.

We were going to call it "Shatter -- Phase 2;" but it's issue #3, and we didn't want to confuse the promotion department... which is *me*.

FIRST IN MARCH

Next month we have a special second anniversary issue of **Grimjack** featuring **Timothy Truman**, **Paul Smith**, and no ads; a very strange issue of **Nexus** featuring the enigmatic **Keith Giffen**; and a new **American Flagg!** team, headed by **Steven Grant** and **Mark Badger** -- plus everybody's favorite Plex video hologram, Bob Violence!

FIRST IN APRIL

We have two new graphic novels coming out in April; but if I tell you about them now, I won't have anything to say next month.

FIRST IN JULY

Okay, so I'm jumping the gun a little. You'll just have to humor me. Besides, this is BIG news. In July, **Dreadstar** jumps ship and joins the First team! That's right. **Jim Starlin** is bringing his epic (get it?) adventure story to First Comics, and our first issue will reveal the secret of the traitor within the midst of Dreadstar and Company.

Carrying on our famous tradition of confusing numbers, the first First issue of **Dreadstar** will be #27, on sale one month after issue #26!

-- Rick Oliver

FIRST IN FEBRUARY

American Flagg! #30: The finale to "The Fire This Time" by **Howard Chaykin**, **Joe Staton**, and **Hilary Barta**.

Badger #12: "Blood on the Snow," by **Mike Baron**, **Bill Reinhold**, and **Keith Wilson**. Plus: Zoomtown by **Mike Baron**, **Ron Wagner**, and **Gary Martin**.

Dynamo Joe #2: Chapter two of our three-part mini-series by **Doug Rice**, **John Ostrander**, **Brian Thomas**, and **John Nyberg**.

Elric: Sailor on the Seas of Fate #7: The last installment of our first limited series adapting the sword-and-sorcery tales of **Michael Moorcock**. Stay tuned for a new Elric series in June!

Grimjack #23: "Demon Blood, Part One," by **John Ostrander**, **Tom Sutton**, and **Paul Guinan**. Plus: Munden's Bar by **Phil Foglio**.

Jon Sable, Freelance #37: Sable has a deadly rendevous in Africa. Story and art by **Mike Grell**.

Nexus #21: "The War for Ylum," by **Mike Baron**, **Steve Rude**, and **John Nyberg**. Plus: Tales from the Clonezone by **Mike Baron** and **Mark A. Nelson**.

Shatter #3: The bounty hunter from the future enters a new phase, courtesy of **Steven Grant**, **Steve Erwin**, **Bob Dienethal**, Apple Macintosh, and Apple LaserWriter.

Whisper #1: "Datapanik in the Year Zero," by **Steven Grant**, **Dell Barras**, and **Tim Burgard**.

IF THIS GROUP WAS ANY GREENER THEY'D EAT FLIES.

SOUND OFF, FIRST UNIT...

"RED RYDER: PILOT AND NAVIGATOR: CORPORAL BROWN AND PRIVATE PIOWAR."

"HOPELESS ROMANTIC: PRIVATE AESCHLIMAN, PILOT. PRIVATE CORDELL, NAVIGATOR. WHO PICKED THAT NAME?"

"SWEETUMS: CORPORAL GERLACH AND PRIVATE SCHWARZENEGGER. YOU'RE REALLY GOING TO STICK WITH THAT?"

IT SUITS ME.

I GUESS SO, SARGE, DOLLY INSISTS.

PIOWAR-YO!

BROWN, YO, SERGEANT.

TOOK 'IM TWO OUTTA THREE FALLS, SARGE.

"SURESHOT SAM: CORPORAL STEPHENSON, PRIVATE HASHIMOTO."

"HAWKEYE: SERGEANT ALLEN AND PRIVATE MENDEZ. SCATHER: SERGEANT RICHMOND AND PRIVATE HAMMOND. YOU GUYS WILL BE MY WINGMEN.

OF COURSE. WHO ELSE?

YOUR MAMA, RICHMOND. THAT'S WHO.

"EVIL EYE: SERGEANT DUNN AND PRIVATE KARMA. HOW'S THE ALLERGY PROBLEM?"

LIVABLE, SARGE.

RRRRR! ORRR WOULD BE IF YOU'D JUST CHANGE YOURRR POMADE!

ALL PRESENT AND DISCOUNTED FOR, SARGE!

THE BIG NEWS IS NO NEWS. WE EMBARK IN TWELVE HOURS FOR A MAJOR ACTION AGAINST THE MELLENARES.

I KNOW SOME OF YOU STILL CAN'T BELIEVE THAT THESE GIANT METAL NIGHTMARES ARE ACTUALLY INHABITED BY MILLIONS OF AMOEBA-SIZED BEINGS LINKED TOGETHER BY A SUB-SPACE BOND. OR MAYBE YOU DON'T BELIEVE THEY CAN BE REALLY DANGEROUS.

BELIEVE IT.

POMRU AND I HAVE TRIED, OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS, TO SHARE SOME OF OUR EXPERIENCE, BUT NOTHING CAN BEAT YOUR OWN. GIVEN THE NATURE OF THIS BATTLE, THE ODDS ARE MOST OF YOU WILL DIE BEFORE YOU GET IT.

THE SCIENTISTS FIGURE THERE HAS TO BE SOME SORT OF CENTRAL "CORE" FOR THE MELLENARE GROUP MIND, SHIELDED BY ITS OUTER WALL OF WAR MACHINES.

DAMAGE OR DESTROY THE "CORE" AND YOU'LL STOP THE ENEMY.

THIS IS THE *WANDO ORTEN*, AN OLD CRUISER STRIPPED TO ESSENTIALS, WITH A SKELETON CREW AND PACKED WITH *EXPLOSIVES*.

WE'RE TO HELP THE ORTEN PUNCH A *HOLE* THROUGH THE OUTER PERIMETER SO THE SHIP CAN GET TO THE CORE AND DETONATE. A HALF DOZEN OR MORE UNITS WILL REPEAT THE SAME MANEUVER ALL ALONG THE FRONT.

THIS IS A SUICIDE RUN!

YEAH! HASN'T THE HIGH COMMAND LEARNED *ANYTHING* SINCE THE RIM BATTLE MASSACRE?!

DO YOUR JOB, *ROOKIES*, IF YOU *CAN*-- AND TRY TO GET *ONE* BATTLE UNDER YOUR BELTS BEFORE YOU TELL HIGH COMMAND HOW TO DO *THEIR* JOBS!

DISMISSED!

GETTING SMASHED IN A FRIENDLY BAR IS PERHAPS NOT THE RECOMMENDED WAY TO SPEND THE LAST NIGHT BEFORE A BATTLE -- BUT NEITHER IS IT UNCOMMON. WHATEVER IT TAKES TO GET YOU THROUGH THE LAST NERVE-WRACKING HOURS, THAT'S WHAT YOU DO.

AWWR, *HAIRBALLS!* THE SQUAD'S *ORGANIZED* SARGE, BUT IT STILL AIN'T WORKIN' AS A *UNIT!*

IT ISN'T HARD TO REASON WHY. THEY DON'T REALLY TRUST US. AS FAR AS *THEY'RE* CONCERNED, ELANIAN DARO'S THE IMPERIAL WHOSE *INCOMPETENCE* SCREWED UP THE *GALAX-C* TEST.

WHO WANTS TO BE LED BY SCREW-UPS?

SOUNDS LIKE YOU HAVE A *PROBLEM,* ACE.

ANDA! SARGE BI--!

DON'T, POMRU. I WANT YOU GUYS TO KNOW THAT I GOT THE *TRUTH* ABOUT THAT "INCIDENT," AND I *KNOW* YOU BOTH GOT SHAFTED, BUT *HIGH COMMAND* SQUELCHED MY STORY AND WOULDN'T LET IT OUT!

AWWR, SARGE GOT THE WORST OF IT. HIS OWN PEOPLE WON'T HAVE ANYTHING MORE TO DO WITH HIM.

IS THAT SO BAD? SARGE, YOU'VE GOT TO KNOW YOUR PEOPLE AREN'T VERY WELL LIKED.

ALL THAT I AM IS WOUND UP WITH MY PEOPLE. ALL MEMBERS OF THE IMPERIUM, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE IMMORTAL MAGNA KHAN--WHO ALONE, OF ALL WHO LIVE, HAS MASTERED THE SECRETS OF LIFE AND CONQUERED THE GREATEST ENEMY, DEATH!

HE CAME TO WHAT IS NOW OUR THRONEWORLD WITH HIS HAREM AND ENGENDERED A NEW RACE, DEDICATED TO THE PERFECTION OF BODY AND MIND.

ONLY ONE WAY MAY WE, HIS CHILDREN, SHARE IN THE KHAN'S IMMORTALITY--BY ACHIEVING ENOUGH GLORY SO THAT THE KHAN WILL REMEMBER OUR NAMES FOREVER. TO BE CAST OUT IS TO BE FORGOTTEN--TO BE FORGOTTEN IS WORSE THAN DEATH.

THIS KHAN OF YOURS GIVES A WHOLE NEW MEANING TO "FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY."

FORGIVE ME, SARGE, BUT IT ALL SEEMS A BIT SILLY TO ME.

ALL BELIEFS ARE STRANGE TO THOSE WHO DO NOT SHARE THEM.

SHALL WE DISCUSS SOME OF YOURS?

SUDDENLY...

KRASH!

THAT DAMN NEAR TOOK YOUR *HEAD* OFF!

HEY, *SARGE!* THOSE GUYS ARE PICKIN' ON OUR ROOKIES! THAT'S *OUR* JOB!

BOLAN!

GOHAW! LITTLE *ELANIAN!*

I *MIGHT KNOW* THESE *PATHETIC WIMPS* TO BE *YOURS!* THEY NEED *DISCIPLINE,* LITTLE ELANIAN!

DO *NOT FEAR!* I AND *MY* MEN- YOUR BIG *BROTHERS*- SHALL DO THIS FOR OUR LITTLE ELANIAN, *eh?*

KRAK! KRAK!

LIKE *HELL!* SOME CRAP WE DON'T *HAFTA* EAT!

ROBIN UP, TIM! LET'S SEE HOW OL' PARO *HANDLES* THIS!

NO? THEN TAKE THEM *AWAY*, LITTLE BLANIAN! PUT THEM TO BED! KISS THEM GOODNIGHT!

DO THIS *NOW!*

YOU'RE OUT OF *LINE* AND OUT OF YOUR *DEPTH*, BOLAN.

THESE ARE *MY* PEOPLE. WHERE THEY EAT, DRINK, SLEEP- *WHATEVER*- IS *NONE* OF YOUR CONCERN.

KEEP YOUR *OWN* PEOPLE IN LINE, IF YOU CAN, BEFORE THEY *TARNISH* THE NAMB OF THE *MAGNA KHAN* FURTHER.

YOU *DARE* TO SPEAK OF THE KHAN'S *HONOR?!*

WHAM!

YOU!!! *DARO* THE DISGRACED!!!

KRUNCH!

YOU HEARD SERGEANT BOLAN, TERRIE*! REMOVE YOURSELF!

WE ALSO HEARD OUR SARGE, IMPIE*. SO INSTEAD I'LL JUST REMOVE YOUR NOSE!

*TERRIE-TERRESTRIAL; INSULTING SLANG FOR ANYONE FROM THE CONFEDERATION.
*IMPIE-INSULTING SLANG FOR A MEMBER OF THE IMPERIUM-ED.

KRRAK!

HEY, SARGE! SAVE SOME FOWR ME!

BARRIMANILO!

BRRRRRRP

IF MOST OF YOU WEREN'T GOING TO DIE IN BATTLE, YOU'D ALL BE IN VERY BIG TROUBLE.

OH YEAH? WHO'RE YOU?

TANNEMARA AM I, SKIPPER OF THE WAHOO ORTEK, AND I HAVE COME TO CLAIM THE DYNAMO SQUADRON THAT WILL BE MY ESCORT.

TANNEMARA?! HUH! WELL, WHEN I'M UPSIDE DOWN, I GUESS THEY ALL LOOK ALIKE.

SPECTRE SQUADRON! PREPARE TO...

MOVE OUT, ALL DYNAMO UNITS AND ATTENDANT CRUISERS!

FIRST CONTACT, ENEMY UNITS: T MINUS THIRTY, MARK!

SIX DAYS IT HAS TAKEN THE ASSEMBLED CENTRAL FLEET TO REACH AND RE-ASSEMBLE HERE IN THE STAGING AREA, NEAR THE BINARY STAR, PROCYON, LESS THAN A LIGHT YEAR FROM THE ADVANCING MELLENARES.

AS THE OLD CRUISERS AND THEIR DYNAMO ESCORTS CREEP FORWARD, THE CENTRAL FLEET AWAITS IN FINAL BATTLE FORMATION--AND IN THE VANGUARD SITS THE STARHAMMER, FLAGSHIP OF THE LEADER OF THE IMPERIUM FORCES, PRINCE SHABTON.

AH, MS. WARREN! WE ARE GLAD YOU COULD JOIN US. THIS IS MY CHIEF HELM OFFICER, COMMANDER ALEXANDRA DARO. COMMANDER, YOU HAVE MET OUR GUEST, THE RENOWNED WAR CORRESPONDENT, YES?

I KNOW ALL ABOUT MS. WARREN, YOUR HIGHNESS.

"DARO?"

WE WERE DELIGHTED, MS. WARREN, TO HONOR YOUR REQUEST TO VIEW THIS MOST IMPORTANT BATTLE FROM OUR SHIP. IT IS OUR HOPE THAT BY DOING SO, WE SHALL HELP BUILD A BRIDGE OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN OUR PEOPLES.

MY FATHER HAS NOT ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD THE IMPORTANCE OF THAT BRIDGE. DON'T YOU AGREE, COMMANDER?

OF COURSE, MY PRINCE.

WHO IS THIS WOMAN? ELANIAN'S WIFE? OH GAWD, I'LL KILL HIM!

SPECTRE SQUAD LEADER TO ORTEN. NO SIGN ON OUR SCOPES YET.

YOU HAVE ANYTHING BETTER?

WYRD?

HELL NO! WITH *THIS* RUST BUCKET? WE'RE LUCKY TO SCOPE THE DYNAMO UNITS.

WE'RE GONNA HAFTA DO SOME *PATCHING* ON THIS TUB 'FORE THIS IS OVER. Y KNOW, ANYBODY GOT ANY *GUM*?

ORTEN TO SQUAD LEADER YOU'LL HAVE TO BE OUR EYES DARO. WE'RE NEARSIGHTED.

YOU JUICE THE SCANNERS AS WELL AS THE ENGINES, POMRU?

AWR, GEE, SARGE! YA *KNOWAR* THAT'S AGAINST ALL THE *REGS*!

LET'S SEE IF KABTO CAUGHT IT.

Kabto

breepbreepbreep

HOLY TUNA!

SCHNABORABBERS SARGE! OODLES AN' OODLES!

THE ALIEN WAR MACHINES GLITTER LIKE DIAMONDS AGAINST VELVET, CLUSTERED LIKE A GALAXY, SEEMINGLY LIMITLESS IN NUMBER, ADVANCING-- WAVE AFTER WAVE-- TOWARDS THE BELEAGURED FORCES OF THE ALLIANCE.

THE ARMADA OF THE ALLIANCE IS THE GREATEST CONCENTRATION OF MEN AND MACHINES THIS GALAXY HAS SEEN SINCE THE START OF THE WAR, AND STILL THEY ARE BADLY OUTNUMBERED.

ALL GUNS, ALL SHIPS-- TRIANGULATE AND FOCUS ON SPECIFIED TARGETS! WE *MUST* BORE HOLES FOR THE ASSAULT SHIPS!

NOW... FIRE!

WAVE AFTER WAVE OF CORUSCATING ENERGY SURGES TOWARDS THE MELLENARES.

THEY DIE BY THE THOUSANDS.

THEY SURVIVE BY THE TENS OF THOUSANDS-- AND MARCH FORWARD.

OUR TURN.

HOPELESS ROMANTIC. CHECK YOUR ALIGNMENT! YOU'RE DRIFTING INTO THE ORTEN'S FIRE LANE!

COOKIE, BRING US FULL AHEAD! WE'RE STARTING OUR RUN!

WYAD, ENGAGE AND LOCK BELLY CANNON ON AUTOMATIC!

FIRE!

OKAY WE'VE GOT THEIR ATTENTION! ALL UNITS... FULL SHIELDS!

HERE IT COMES!

SARGE! RED RYDER'S DOWN!

JIMINY! THEY BURNED RIGHT THROUGH HIS SHIELDS!

FORGET HIM. HE'S GONE— MOVE ON!

DEPLOY DYNA SHEILDS!

THEY WON'T BE THE LAST TO DIE TODAY!

ENEMY RANGE... 1000 KLIKS AND CLOSING!

PREPARE FOR HAND-TO-HAND!

THROW OUT YOUR WINGS, KICK IN THE AFTERBURNERS AND GET THE LEAD OUT... ALL OF YOU. NOW!

HAIRBALLS!

THE SCHNABCRABBERS ARE OPENIN' UP LIKE ACCORDIONS, SARGE!

SURESHOT SAM TO JOE! AM ENGAGING ENEMY WITH VIBRASWORD!

WATCH YOURSELF, STEPHENSON!

TEXTBOOK TECHNIQUE, SARGE! NO SWEAT!

YAHOO! FIRST BLOOD, SARGE, TO OL' SURESHOT SAM!

THE CORE, STEPHENSON! FORGET THE TENTACLES-- GO FOR THE CORE!

I'M HOLED!

HE'S DEAD.

SARGE!

KRAK

SHAARRK!

DARO! THEY'RE PLUGGING THE HOLE!

PUNCH A NEW ONE WITH YOUR BATTERY! WE'LL BRACE IT!

SPECTRE SQUAD! DIVERT ALL AVAILABLE POWER TO YOUR WEAPONS SYSTEMS!

POWER UP!

HIT 'EM, WYRD! SALVO!

SHE'S DONE IT, SARGE! THERE'S A TUNNEL AT THE END OF THE LIGHT!

DO AS WELL, MUDBALLERS! STRIKE! DIE IF YOU MUST!

WE MUST NOT BE STOPPED!

fffttt!

THEY FIGHT LIKE DEMONS IN METAL. THEY GIVE THEIR BEST, AND SOME GIVE THEIR LIVES. EVIL EVE JOINS THE GROWING LIST OF FATALITIES.

IT'S ALL FOR NOTHING.

SARJINT! THE ORTEN'S DOWN!

OARO TO TANNEMARA! YOU GUYS ALIVE?!

FEUH! WE LIVE BUT THE SHIP IS DEAD!

ABANDON SHIP!

ALL UNITS! THIS IS FIELD MARSHALL IPPOLITOV!

ABORT MISSION! ABANDON CRUISERS! THOSE THAT CAN MUST RETURN TO DEFEND CENTRAL FLEET!

AYE... AYE. EJECTING... COMMAND POD!

tek!

RETREAT! ABORT MISSION!

THEY HEAR THE DEATH-KNELL IN THE COMMAND. THEY'VE FAILED!

SPECTRE SQUAD, WHAT IS YOUR STATUS? WHO'S ALIVE? REPORT!

HAWKEYE ALIVE! SCATHER'S CHEWED UP AWFUL AND EVIL EYE'S GONE FOR SURE. SWEETUMS TOOK A HELL OF A SHOT! DOLLY?

WE'RE ON FIRE AND BLEEDING OXY SOMETHIN' FEARFUL-- BUT I THINK WE CAN MAKE IT BACK TO THE TRANSPORT.

RED RYDER AND SURESHOT SAM ARE DAID! SARGE, WHATTA WE DO?

FOUR UNITS LEFT FUNCTIONAL! KHAN!

FIGHTING RETREAT, SPECTRE. COVER THE POD AND DAMAGED BOTS. DEFENSIVE DIAMOND-- MOVE!

JIMINY XMAS-- THIS'S GOTTA BE WORSE THAN THE RIM BATTLE MASSACRES!

BOLDSHOT BRIMFIRE'S A TOTAL DISASTER!

THE KAHOO ORTEN LIES DEAD AND SHATTERED IN SPACE, LIKE THE PLANS OF THE ALLIANCE, AS THE MALLENARES PRESS ON FOR THE FINAL KILL!

NEXT MONTH: **IN THE ASHES!**